

As we celebrate Memorial Day this year in honor of those who gave their lives for our country, we must consider the best way to pay homage to our heroes and heroines.

Congresswoman Kaptur, who authored the legislation to create the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., is now spearheading an effort to promote the Veterans History Project throughout the Ninth Congressional District.

Congresswoman Kaptur recently sponsored local training sessions for volunteers to participate in the Veterans History Project as interviewers. One session was held in Toledo and another at the BGSU Firelands campus in Huron.

"It is critical that we preserve our nation's history, including the fight to preserve democracy and freedom around the world, and there is no better way to do this than to ask those who served in this nation's military to tell their stories," said Rep. Kaptur. "Volunteering for this program can connect generations and make history real for the volunteers and those who will read their stories."

The Veterans History Project, part of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war. To date, the project has compiled more than 68,000 individual collections, which include audio and video interviews, original photographs, letters, and other historical documents from veterans of every war and conflict since World War I.

Northwest Ohio has a unique resource in Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections at the University of Toledo. The Canaday Center collects the VHP interviews among their special collections, and forwards copies to become part of the permanent collection at the Library of Congress. Thus, our veterans' stories are kept here and can be shared with family members and interested citizens. To date, the Canaday Center has collected approximately 500 histories, and yet we know there are more stories to be collected.

To learn more about participating in the program, go to <http://www.loc.gov/vets/vets-home.html>

To search the Veterans History Project collection, go to <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/html/search/search.html>